

pathway, and we'll throw them off, throw off those burdens as we run. In the same spirit, the 43 millions with disabilities have asked, to paraphrase President Kennedy, not what their country can do for them but only that they be allowed to do for themselves, and thereby their country. I believe that the economic challenges of the next century cannot, simply cannot, be met without the energy and the intelligence of, the industry of every citizen.

ADA broadens our economic mainstream so that all Americans can share in the responsibilities and rewards of hard work worth doing. A few critics—Bob knows this well from his leadership role in the Congress—have complained about the costs of ADA as if some rights were simply too expensive. But when you add together Federal, State, local, and private funds, it's been costing almost \$200 billion annually to support our disabled in artificial isolation. And this legislation takes an economic inefficiency and reinvents it then as opportunity and enterprise.

Indeed, I believe that the costs of forgotten citizens is greater than any that can be factored into some Government budget. And when we neglect the rights of some, we simply degrade the rights of all. The quest for civil rights is not a zero sum game, as if there were only so many rights to go around. Our founders thought of rights not as privileges granted by man but as self-evident truths ordained by God.

But just as our Constitution pledges equality under law, so we must strive for legal equality, one that broadens opportunity, increases access, and gives each citizen a fair shot at the American dream. And the beautiful thing is this legislation does just that, not by setting up new institutions but by tearing down old walls. And you see, I believe that in the end it will take more than better regulations and bigger bureaucracies to make this land the land of opportunity for all.

Government can certainly make good laws; it can't make men good. It can ban unfair acts; it can't banish unkind thoughts. And so it's up to us to reach out to those Americans disabled by ignorance or handicapped by prejudice and teach them a better way. Each American shares a responsibility for a kinder, gentler America, to follow the example that

so many of you in this room have led with your lives.

I'm not sure I know exactly what I'll be doing a few months from now, but I want to say this: I want to stay involved. I want to help. I'll be a private citizen, not sitting at the head table, out of the Government limelight, but I want to help. I want to stay involved in this kind of important work.

I'm not sure how historians will record the fact that the first George Bush Medal was given to George Bush. [Laughter] There seems something a little contradictory perhaps on that. But you've made me very happy. And I admire you. I respect you. I love you, and I wish you all well.

Thank you, and may God bless you all.

Note: The President spoke at 2:20 p.m. at the Capital Hilton. In his remarks, he referred to Evan Kemp, Chairman, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; Justin Dart, Chairman, President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities; former Attorney General Dick Thornburgh and his wife, Ginny; Patrisha Wright, government affairs director, Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund, Inc.; Judi Chamberlin, coordinating committee member, National Association of Psychiatric Survivors; Thomas McKeithan II, Benjamin Banneker High School student; and Dr. I. King Jordan, president, Gallaudet University.

Remarks on Presenting the Presidential Medal of Freedom to President Ronald Reagan

January 13, 1993

President Reagan, you can see from that welcome how we all feel about your and Nancy's return to this house that you graced. We're delighted to welcome you back here. And of course, I want to send my special greetings to those who served in the Reagan Cabinet and to the Reagan family. And it's a pleasure to welcome all of you back here to the White House.

Being President has its privileges. And this morning I have the privilege to present America's highest civilian award, the Presi-

dential Medal of Freedom, with distinction, to my predecessor, the 40th President of the United States. Today we honor the American life of an American original. We all remember the movie in which he once said, "Win one for the Gipper." Well, as President, Ronald Reagan helped win one for freedom, both at home and abroad. And I consider him my friend and mentor, and so he is. And he's also a true American hero.

Just think of the whistlestops that ring unsummoned, like a postcard from the past: Dixon, Tampico, Eureka College, WHO radio in Des Moines. Always Ronald Reagan embodied the heart of the American people. And once he described it as "hopeful, big-hearted, idealistic, daring, decent, and fair."

Ronald Reagan didn't just make the world believe in America; he made Americans believe in themselves. And I remember Inauguration Day in 1981 and how the clouds—maybe you remember it—of a gloomy morning gave way as he began his speech. He turned that winter of discontent into a springtime of possibility.

President Reagan believed in the American people, so he helped the private sector create 19 million new jobs. He knew that Government was too big and spent too much, and so he lowered taxes and spending, cut redtape, and began a peacetime boom, the longest in American history.

Some men reflect their times. Ronald Reagan changed his times. And nowhere was that more true than abroad where he championed the holy grail of liberty. Mr. President, you helped make ours not only a safer but far better world in which to live. And you yourself said it best. In fact, you saw it coming. We recall your stirring words to the British Parliament. Here were the words: "The march of freedom and democracy will leave Marxist-Leninism on the ash heap of history."

Few people believe more in liberty's inevitable triumph than Ronald Reagan. None, none was more a prophet in his time. Ronald Reagan rebuilt our military; not only that, he restored its morale. And when I became President, President Reagan passed on to me the most dedicated and best equipped fighting force that the world has ever seen.

He signed also the INF treaty, the first agreement to eliminate a whole category of nuclear weapons. And it was a treaty that lay the foundation then for START I and the historic START II agreement that President Yeltsin and I signed 2 weeks ago.

Ronald Reagan sought a world where nations could talk, not die, over differences and a world of prosperity, peaceful competition, and freedom without war. And he helped achieve it, helped end the cold war.

When Ronald Reagan's favorite President died in 1945, the New York Times wrote, "Men will thank God on their knees a hundred years from now that Franklin D. Roosevelt was in the White House." Well, Mr. President it will not take a hundred years; millions thank God today that you were in the White House.

You loved America, blessed America, and with your leadership certainly helped make America that shining city on a hill. All this explains why today Ronald Reagan becomes only the third President to receive the Medal of Freedom, the first to receive it in his own lifetime. He's a man whose life embodies freedom, who nurtured freedom as few Presidents ever have.

And so now, Mr. President, let me invite you, sir, to join me as Major Wissler reads the citation for the Medal of Freedom. Please come up.

***Note:** The President spoke at 10:20 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. Maj. John Wissler, USMC, is Marine Corps Aide to the President.*

Remarks on Presenting the National Security Medal to Admiral Jonathan T. Howe and an Exchange With Reporters

January 13, 1993

The President. John, welcome. This is a surprise. [Laughter] [Inaudible]—are very proud to award you the National Security Medal. And I would ask Bill Sittmann to read a very quick citation. We're sorry to blindsides you like this, but the only way we knew that